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Urban Times

ARCHIVES

FOOD IN FILMS

Urban Times neighbors
share their favorites
with our
favorite dietitian

By Kim Galeaz

Food. Wine. Eating. Drinking. Watching Movies. All necessary ingredients for a satisfying, delicious life. How could it possibly get any better? Here's how: watching food-themed movies!

Enjoying a couple of these delectable movies with provocative food scenes and plots might be exactly what you need to make it through the rest of winter. So grab a blanket, a glass of wine and cuddle up on the couch next to your favorite movie-watching buddy.

But be forewarned: There are more than *a couple* great food movies. There are a couple *dozen*.

Watching all of them means you'll still be cuddling on the couch (no blanket, though) well into spring or summer.

I developed this particular list of food movies by asking some of my Downtown neighbors to share their favorite movies from this genre. I compared them to my own favorites and then met with Rick Cook, co-owner of Mass Ave Video. He gave me a few more ideas by searching the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) and checked his stock for availability. Rick, and Keith Washington, also co-owner, have made sure the majority of these titles are on the shelf waiting for you to rent and enjoy.



After you've picked out a movie at Mass Ave Video, head straight to Easley Winery, Goose the Market or Mass Ave Wine Shoppe and grab a bottle of wine – the preferred movie-watching beverage, according to my Downtown neighbors. Don't worry if you can't figure out what wine to purchase, because I've asked Meredith Easley from Easley Winery, Gabe Jordan from Goose the Market and Jill Ditmire from Mass Ave Wine Shoppe to share their expertise and suggest the perfect wine for a handful of these movies.

While there is no consensus on preferred movie-viewing food, several neighbors share their favorites from traditional popcorn and pizza to candy and full meals. Cheers to food, wine and movies!

OUR CONSULTANTS

Mass Ave Video

Rick Cook and Keith
Washington, co-owners
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Mass Ave Wine Shoppe

Jill Ditmire, owner
878 Massachusetts Ave.
972-7966

Easley Winery

Meredith Easley, co-owner
205 North College Ave.
636-4516

Goose the Market

Gabe Jordan, wine steward
2503 North Delaware St.
924-4944

“Chocolat” (2000)

Was it Johnny Depp or the chocolate that really made this movie? I still can't decide, even though I watched this movie again recently with my ever-so-handsome husband Jeff. There are incredible scenes of chocolate-making, window displays of chocolate and people eating chocolate. But that Johnny Depp. His aura. His eyes. The way he drinks hot chocolate. Anyway. Many of you picked “Chocolat” as a favorite. Notable cast members in “Chocolat” besides Depp include Judy Dench and Alfred Molina.

FRANK and **MARSHA HANOU** of Lockerbie Square: *“Chocolat” was the “Pleasantville” of food movies. The hypnotic effects of chocolate in a small French town secretly transformed its morality. The sinfully delicious creations by the chocolatier (played by Juliette Binoche) stirred long lost emotions and feelings. While watching movies, we love to share a small piece of Divine 70% Dark Chocolate from Global Gifts on Mass Ave.*

CYNTHIA HELPHINGSTINE of Lockerbie Square: *There are so many good food movies! It is tough to narrow my list, but number-one has to be “Chocolat” with Johnny Depp and Juliette Binoche. Great acting, an upbeat story and of course chocolate! My favorite food to eat during movies, the classic popcorn! I have never understood how people can eat pizza during a movie. Pizza is for football games!*

Wine Recommendation: Raspberry Wine from Easley Winery. Meredith: *It's tart, full bodied, 100% scrumptious and bursting with pure goodness, just like the movie.*

“Big Night” (1996)

CAROL FAENZI of Chatham Arch: *My favorite food movie of all time is “Big Night” starring Stanley Tucci, Minnie Driver, Isabella Rossellini and Tony Shalhoub. It is about a failing Italian restaurant run by two Italian immigrant brothers who gamble on one special night to save their business. The sound track is filled with great hits by Louis Prima, Rosemary Clooney and others. The movie is all about food, drink, song and sex – all great Italian themes. Enjoying a plate of spaghetti and meatballs with a great glass of Chianti while watching this movie is a wonderful antidote to a chilly evening. Mangia!*

JIM and **CHERYL STRAIN** of the Old Northside: *“Big Night” makes us absolutely drool. We will often have a glass of red wine (Italian, of course) and a bit of dark chocolate as we watch it.* ▶

IN ADDITION:

Even more great food movies which were not part of the “Food and Movies” feature in the March issue of Urban Times:

“Babette’s Feast” (1987)

CHERYL STRAIN and **SHARON GAMBLE** of Meridian Park both highly recommend this Academy Award winner for Best Foreign Language Film. Two elderly Danish sisters, Martina and Philippa, have given up their own passions and pleasures to remain single and care for their father, the town pastor. Even after he dies, they keep his morally strict teachings alive among the townspeople. But then a mysterious French refugee, Babette, arrives in this coastal Denmark town. She's taken in by the sisters and works for them as a maid, cook and housekeeper. Eventually, she convinces the sisters to allow her to throw a gourmet French feast for the church people, which shakes everyone and everything up.

“Under the Tuscan Sun” (2003)

Four different Urban Times readers mentioned this serendipitous movie set in beautiful Tuscan countryside. It happens to be one of my husband's all-time favorite movies because of the uplifting messages of love, support and happiness. Plus, he wants to go to Italy and the beautiful countryside and ocean scenes provide a quick fix. Food isn't the focus in this movie, but “cooking for someone” is one of the three wishes Diane Lane makes in the movie. There is one great scene where she's cooking and serving all these mouth-watering Italian dishes.

“My Big Fat Greek Wedding” (2002)

BECKY RUBY of Herron-Morton Place says this comedy is one of her favorite food movies. Food is an underlying theme in the movie not only because it's so prominent in Greek culture to begin with, but because the star's family owns a restaurant. My favorite scene? The Bundt cake. I couldn't stop laughing.

“The Wedding Banquet” (1989)

Even though food isn't a real focus in this movie, it's another must-see movie written and directed by Ang Lee about life, love, family traditions and acceptance. A Taiwanese-American lives with his gay partner in Manhattan. To prevent his old-fashioned parents from finding out, his partner suggests a marriage of convenience to a Taiwanese girl needing a green card. When the Taiwanese

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SHARON GAMBLE of Meridian Park: *Though I love “Babette’s Feast,” “Like Water for Chocolate” and many other foodie movies, I think my all-time favorite is Campbell Scott and Stanley Tucci’s “Big Night” (they co-directed). The cast is as delectable as the on-screen feast: Tony Shaloub, Stanley Tucci, Isabella Rossellini, Minnie Driver, Allison Janney, Liev Schreiber, Ian Holm...how could this not be a meal to remember? The movie-night menu should include a fabulous prosecco (ask Jill at Mass Ave Wine Shoppe for recommendations), antipasti, risotto, a seafood pasta dish with pink caper cream sauce (this course might be takeout from Amici’s!), and, if you’re ambitious, the Timpano that provides the culinary conundrum for the two brothers. This meal should definitely be followed by espresso and some Louis Prima tracks for dancing off those calories!*

Well put, Sharon. I’m awarding you Honorary Dietitian status with that sage advice. For those of you curious about the Timpano, it’s a high-sided, drum-shaped, molded dish made from a pastry crust and filled with meatballs, pasta, marinara sauce, cheese, other meats and vegetables and even hard-boiled eggs. In the movie, the Timpano is the star of the big feast and is lovingly showcased before being cut into magnificent pieces like a cake.

Wine Recommendation: Sedara, Nero D’Avola, Italy or Donna Fugata, Anthilia Italy from Mass Ave Wine Shoppe. Jill: *Two Sicilians that embrace food, fun, family. A glass of the red whisks you away to an Italian plaza where you sit and eat from a table overflowing with steak bistecca, pasta bolognese and local cheeses. The white is no sissy either – lush, rich, silky with citrus seduction. Bravissimo! Mangia Mangia*

“Like Water for Chocolate” (1992)

KELLIE WELBORN of Herron-Morton Place and Sharon Gamble of Meridian Park both mentioned this as a favorite foodie movie. “Like Water for Chocolate” is a passionate love story between Tita and Pedro. Tita’s mother doesn’t allow them to marry, so Pedro marries Tita’s sister just so he can be around Tita. The only way she can show her love and sensuality is through cooking and baking. She even helps make the wedding cake that calls for 170 eggs! The close-up food prep scenes were delightful. Wish the story would have turned out differently, though.

Wine Recommendation: Crios de Susanna Balbo Rose of Old Vine Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina from Goose the Market. Gabe: *The surreal nature of this film makes it a tough assignment. The food is all over the place as well. Passion, intensity, and love dominate as themes throughout the film and the accompanying food. This particular wine brings many of those qualities to mind, especially in the expressiveness of the red fruit (strawberries and raspberries), the floral aromatics (rose), and some of the tropical flavors. It has acid, structure and balance that make it a wonderful food wine. It would go very well with Tita’s quail with rose petal sauce.*

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parents arrive for the wedding, they’re mortified their son isn’t having the big Wedding Banquet. They agree to the banquet and the family name is saved. Lots of scenes with food being passed around, but not much cooking. What happens after the Banquet complicates everything. I get a kick out the girl/bride, who can’t even cook eggs.

“The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover” (1989)

TIFFANY BENEDICT BERKSON of Herron-Morton Place recommends this as a French food movie, although many say it’s more of a black comedy/erotic thriller involving murder and infidelity.

“Nina’s Heavenly Delights” (2006)

Rick at Mass Ave Video said that this relatively unheard-of comedy is about a young Asian Scottish woman who is forced to return to Glasgow and help run her dead father’s Indian restaurant, The New Taj. She’s reunited with childhood friend, Bobbi, now a wannabe drag queen, and Lisa, the woman who owns the other half of the restaurant. Plus, the restaurant has been selected for The Best of the West Curry Competition. Nina and Lisa are on a mission to win the trophy for the third time. To make matters more complicated, Nina is falling in love with Lisa.

“Heartburn” (1989)

NANCY ARMSTONG: *This movie is based on the book by Nora Ephron and stars Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep. There’s lots of great food throughout and once it’s even used as a weapon. I love the scene early in their relationship when they’re in bed sharing a big bowl of pasta she’s ‘whipped up’ on the spur of the moment.*

In “Heartburn,” Meryl Streep plays a food writer for a New York magazine and Jack Nicholson is a Washington columnist.

“Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life” (1983)

Tiffany Benedict Berkson of Herron-Morton Place: *What would I eat whilst watching? It’d be great if it were played at an all-you-can eat buffet!*

Some (many) of my friends say my lack of knowledge about certain worldly things is because I didn’t watch Monty Python (or have a Barbie doll when I was little). Okay. I readily admit that I just don’t “get” some of the humor and/or have a terrible time following it. We all have our strong suits, right? Anyway, Urban Times editor Bill Brooks assures me that the restaurant scene will put even the heartiest glutton off his feed for a moment or two.

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THE AUTHOR: *Chatham Arch resident Kim Galeaz, R.D., C.D., is a freelance food and nutrition writer, registered dietitian and consultant to the food and beverage industry. Popcorn is her favorite movie-viewing food along with dark beer or red wine. About the only movies she won't watch are horror flicks. Kim can be reached at kim@kimgaleaz.com.*



“Eat Drink Man Woman” (1994)

Lockerbie Square resident **DOROTHY. ILGEN** lists this Taiwanese movie with subtitles as one of her favorites. “Eat Drink Man Woman” was written and directed by award-winning Ang Lee of “Ice Storm,” “Sense & Sensibility” and “Brokeback Mountain” fame. “Tortilla Soup” is actually the Latino version of “EDMW.”

I’ll reluctantly admit this Taiwanese version is superior – slightly deeper story line and the most amazing food scenes ever. When Jeff and I watched this 123-minute movie recently, it turned into a 155-minute movie. We rewound most of the food scenes because they were both visually stunning and we had no idea what some of that the foods were! So a bit of advice: if you’re like me and not real well versed in authentic Chinese food, watch “EDMW” with someone who is so they can explain every ingredient and dish.

Wine Recommendation: Helfrich Rieseling, Alsace from Mass Ave Wine Shoppe. Jill: *Lovely delicate, intricate flavors that combine to produce a much sturdier flavor. Softly sweet yet clean, fresh with the lingering flavor of freedom.*

“Waitress” (2007)

NANCY ARMSTRONG of the Old Northside: *I feel inspired to bake and try new flavor combinations when watching “Waitress,” the movie about pie-making.*

And it’s about a lot more than just pie-making. Keri Russell plays an unhappy pie-baking waitress stuck in bad marriage. She decides to enter a pie contest to win \$25,000 so she can leave her husband. But an unexpected pregnancy complicates everything. She bakes more than ever and bakes new pies with names like “I Hate My Husband Pie” (bittersweet chocolate left unsweetened) and “Earl Murders Me Because I’m Having an Affair Pie” (smashed blackberries and raspberries in a chocolate crust). Andy Griffith is the diner’s namesake, Joe, and offers wise advice to Keri throughout the movie.

Wine Recommendation: New Day Semi-Dry Mead from Goose the Market. Gabe: *All-American girl faces universal struggle and bakes All-American pies. Drink an All-American wine, specifically New Day Mead, from right here in Central Indiana. Their Semi-Dry Mead is not the cloyingly sweet stuff you might expect, rather it is a sophisticated, dry example of a honey wine made of locally sourced products. Loads of spice, ►*

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“What’s Cooking?” (2000)

Four families in Los Angeles – one Hispanic, one Asian, one African American and one Caucasian with a lesbian daughter who brings her partner home for the holiday – are preparing foods for their Thanksgiving meal while dealing with underlying family tensions. I thought it was fascinating to see the differences and varieties of foods served within each family. Great camera work on the food scenes.

“My Dinner with Andre” (1981)

DOROTHY L. ILGEN: *Who remembers what they ate, but what a meal!*

Actor/writers Wallace Shawn and Andre Gregory play themselves in this drama set in a restaurant. Over the course of an entire dinner meal, they share life stories.

“Mystic Pizza” (1988)

This romantic comedy is Julia Roberts’ first big movie role. She works at the local pizza parlor in Mystic, Conn., where apparently the pizza contains something mystic.

“Spanglish” (2004)

I thought this movie was a lot more about the complexity of relationships and different cultures than it was about food. But the main character, Adam Sandler, (in a surprisingly serious role) plays a well-known, successful chef. There are a few food prep and restaurant scenes throughout this poignant life story.

Sizzlin’ scenes in non-food movies

“9½ Weeks” (1986)

FRANK and **MARSH HANOU** point out that this erotic drama with Kim Basinger and Mickey Rourke contained the hottest food scenes in the history of cinema – and brought a whole new meaning to chopping veggies!

“Tom Jones” (1963)

MARCIA J. ODDI of the Old Northside: *There is only one answer – “Tom Jones.”* Marcia is most assuredly referring to the funny and erotic food scene in this comedy/romance/adventure. (You can view that scene on www.YouTube.com). The movie centers around the adopted son of a British squire who is quite the playboy and comes pretty close to being handed. ■

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light fruit notes and a touch of residual sugar make it perfect for your favorite old-timey pie.

“Tortilla Soup” (2001)

This is probably one of my favorite movies because the main character is Hector Elizondo and I have this thing for bald/slightly balding men. But the food prep and cooking scenes rank right up there, too, from the fresh tomatoes, cilantro and onions for salsa to the traditional Latino dishes. Hector plays a retired chef who lives with his three single, adult daughters in Los Angeles. He’s lost his sense of taste, but still prepares huge family-style dinners and expects the daughters to be there. Every daughter is searching for fulfillment outside the family and everyone – even the father – is looking for love. Raquel Welch is priceless in her role as the overbearing mother of a neighbor.

Wine Recommendation: Reggae Red from Easley Winery. Meredith: *Our Reggae Red is whimsical, sweet and fruity. You will be inspired to create and grateful that you have all of your senses.*

“Dinner Rush” (2000)

No one except former Lockerbie Square resident **MEREDITH GARBER** mentioned this terrific drama. I love mafia and New York-themed movies as much as food movies and “Dinner Rush” combines all three. Danny Aiello plays the proprietor of an Italian restaurant whose chef has a gambling problem. The kitchen scenes in this movie are some of the most realistic I’ve ever seen. The million dollar question you’ll be asking yourself during this movie is: why is John Corbett (of “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” fame) always sitting at the bar? Who is he?

Wine Recommendation: Governor’s Cabernet Sauvignon from Easley Winery. Meredith: *Complex and full of explosive character. At the finish you will know you have experienced something intense.*

“Woman on Top” (2000)

This romantic comedy starring Penelope Cruz received a rating of 4.8 out of 10 on the IMDB website; most of the other food movies received between 6 and 8. But if you really like food-themed movies, you’ll endure this “fluff” story just so you can see the Brazilian food. Penelope plays a chef, Isabella, in her husband’s restaurant in Brazil. But she experiences motion sickness and always has to drive and be on top during sex. Her macho husband can’t deal with this, causing Isabella to head to San Francisco where she ends up getting her own TV cooking show called “Passion Food.” Oh brother. Hang in there – the decent food shots will get you through. While in San Fran, Isabella lives with Monica, her longtime cross-dresser friend; he/she even has a small part in her cooking show.

Wine Recommendation: Domana 5, Ribero Del Duero, Spain from Mass Ave Wine Shoppe. Jill: *A red wine that is big, broad, round, rich, robust, scintillating, yet subtle -- if it was a man it would be on top.*

“Tampopo” (1985)

The DVD of this movie was released in 2005 and according to nearly every food movie list, this Japanese comedy is a must-see. The main story is about a truck driver named Goro and his buddy Gun who help a widowed ramen noodle chef (Tampopo) set up a more successful noodle restaurant. Other stories within the movie continue to celebrate the joys and importance of food in our lives.

Beverage Recommendation: Hitachino Nest White Ale & Red Rice Ale from Goose the Market. Gabe: *Japanese truckers, gangsters, noodles and sex make me think of one thing – beer. While Japan is not known stateside for its depth of beer culture (think Kirin, Sapporo, Asahi), there are some outstanding beers created there by the Kiuchi Brewery, under the Hitachino label. The street food of Tampopo would be wonderful with the Hitachino White Ale (modeled after a Belgian Wit) with its coriander and citrus notes, or the Red Rice Ale, and its touch of malty sweetness.*

“Pieces of April” (2003)

If you want to know how a 20-something and her boyfriend pull off an elaborate Thanksgiving dinner in a tiny New York studio apartment with a broken oven, then rent “Pieces of April.” Katie Holmes stars in this comedy/drama featuring a dysfunctional family and friends that end up being more like family. The cast makes this movie, especially Patricia Clarkson and Oliver Platt. After seeing this movie in ’03, I decided to stop complaining about my not-quite-perfect dining room furniture and 1,400-square-foot Downtown condo.

Wine Recommendation: Warm Mulled Wine from Easley Winery. Meredith: *Challenging and complex. In order to fully appreciate each sensation, remain open minded and find the good. When things get cold we often need something extra to help us warm up.*

“Soul Food” (1987)

KELLIE WELBORN suggests Soul Food as one of her favorite food movies and enjoys drinking a good cabernet along with it. Vanessa Williams and Indianapolis’s own Vivica A. Fox star in this comedy/drama about a mother, her three daughters and extended family members held together through fights and jealousy with the Sunday soul food dinner ritual. When the mother gets sick, the dinners stop and fighting escalates. It takes a creative grandson – the narrator for the movie – to bring everyone back to the table again.

Wine Recommendation: Ken Forester Petit Chenin Blanc, South Africa or Ken Forester Petit Pinotage, South Africa from Mass Ave Wine Shoppe. Jill: *Bring it on!! Two perfect grapes for any cuisine especially the sultry, sumptuous Southern style. Greens, yams, fried chicken, ham, buttermilk biscuits on the plate go well with the crisp, soft honey dew melon/citrus flavors of the dry white Chenin Blanc. The dry red Pinotage offers bright black-cherry flavors and enough juicy tannins to enjoy with smothered pork chops or macaroni and cheese.* ►

“Mostly Martha” (2001)

KELLIE WELBORN also likes this movie about a controlling German chef named Martha. I definitely need to see “Mostly Martha,” because I hear it’s much better than the 2007 remake, “No Reservations,” starring Catherine Zeta-Jones as a Manhattan chef. I was most disappointed with this recent version. It’s the same premise in both movies: workaholic, demanding obsessive chef doesn’t have a social life and is still single. But everything changes when her sister dies and the 8-year-old niece comes to live with her. Complications arise in the kitchen, too, when a new sous chef arrives from Italy.

Wine Recommendation: Georg Gustav Huff Riesling Kabinett from Goose the Market. Gabe: *Martha is sophisticated and obsessive/compulsive, qualities shared by many chefs. These traits are reflected in her food which commands a wine that is versatile and delicious. The Georg Gustav Huff Riesling Kabinett fits the bill with a lightness, some spice and a dry character that pairs well with the brilliant contemporary European cuisine Martha creates.*

“Ratatouille” (2007)

CHERYL and **JIM STRAIN** are fond of numerous food movies including “Ratatouille,” which happens to be one of the few food movies small kids will sit through because it’s a cartoon. Wait, I think the technical term is: animation comedy. Remy is a fine food-loving, garbage-hating rat with a keen sense of smell. His culinary hero is noted Paris Chef Auguste Gusteau (get it?) When the chef dies, Remy ends up cooking at his restaurant by living in the hat of the new garbage boy turned cook named Linguini. Cute story with heartwarming ending.

Wine Recommendation: Columbelle WhiteFrance or Comlumbelle Red, France from Mass Ave Wine Shoppe. Jill: *Enjoy a fun and funky mix on screen and in the bottle. Cartoon-like combinations of out of the ordinary grapes combine to make sassy, yet satisfying bottles of wine. The white is blend of Ugni Blanc and Columbard offering floral notes and soft white grapefruit flavors. The red is merlot and tannat—ripe, jammy red fruit flavors. But like the movie, these south of France value wines offer more serious takeaway pleasure than you might think. ■*